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THE LABAN ART OF MOVEMENT GUILD

NEWS SHEET

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CAN WE HELP YOU?

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EDITORIAL

Has it ever occurred to you how peculiar and meaningless a word becomes when you look at it or say it many times ? " Editorial ", for instance. What does it mean ? Is one really necessary ? What is its purpose ? Should it be a literary gem, of profundity and wisdom, of trenchant wit and tasteful style ? Or should it show a more humble face, pleasant and homely, as befits this unpretentious publication ? Or perhaps a compromise may be achieved : can we retain the natural intimacy of a small body, such as the Guild, and yet avoid the over-familiar chattiness of " Auntie So-and-So's Corner ? "

But are these idle thoughts, profitless speculations upon an empty theme ? For, after all, who reads editorials ? If one may judge correctly from the total lack of response to the heart-cry in the last one, the answer is—nobody.

The chewed pencil, the furrowed brow, the congested brain—are they in vain ? Who knows ?

GUILD LEAFLET

The following is the text of the recently published leaflet setting out the aims and purpose of the Guild. It is intended for distribution to interested or would-be members. Members who would like to have copies of the leaflet for distribution are asked to apply to the Secretary stating the approximate number required.

THE LABAN ART OF MOVEMENT GUILD

MOVEMENT is fundamental to life. Every day we perform innumerable actions, we are moved by various emotions, and our thoughts flow along many different channels.

A growing realisation that all these functions of the human being are, in fact, movement, has increased the urgent need for study and research into the basic principles of the art of movement. In this connection, the work of Rudolf Laban and his pupils has spread all over the world. While in recreation, education and industry, in particular, great advances have already been made, the scope of enquiry is now being extended to other fields, such as drama, the visual arts and movement therapy.

In England, the resultant reawakening of interest in movement in all its manifold aspects culminated, in 1946, in the formation of the Laban Art of Movement Guild. Here, all those interested in the art of movement may come together. Members may wish to dance together, to exchange ideas and experiences, to engage in further enquiry and research, or to collaborate with other national or international bodies. A conference is held annually ; regional groups have been formed of those who wish to meet more frequently, and a News Sheet is published twice a year.

THE LABAN ART OF MOVEMENT GUILD IN FIVE YEARS OF GROWTH, 1946 - 51

The honour of knowing the intricacies, set-up, growth and indeed occasional set-backs of our Guild is only given to a few, the few who have over the past five years served on the Council of our Guild. I feel, along with others, that the time has come to review the Guild work, so that *all* members may trace and feel a sense of pride in the association which they, under the leadership of Mr. Laban, our president, together with the other officers, have helped to create.

Mr. Laban once likened our Guild to a tree with its roots firmly planted, its strength maintained in its trunk and branches by the sap—the life energy of its enthusiastic members, and this it seems is the best simile of all. Let us look then at this tree.

A small group of teachers trained under Miss Ullmann in Manchester, with the purpose of teaching Modern Dance in schools. To this group was put the idea of forming a more permanent group, a Council was formed and met for the first time on January 30th, 1946, in Sheffield, when the truly momentous decision was taken that, to quote from the actual minutes, " A guild with a definite constitution should be formed ". All members present contributed £1 0s. 0d. (for without money work could not go forward!) and on the evening of the same day in the Common Room of the Sheffield Training College, Miss Ullmann announced, amongst cheers, the Council's decision to form a Guild. The roots, then, of the tree had been established.

The growth of the trunk of the tree was a different and tremendous task. Very slowly, and with much deliberation and thought, were various sub-committees formed, a constitution drawn up, membership forms (Associate and Graduate) designed, leaflets, a magazine " Movement ", a booklet " The Art of Movement in Education, Industry and on the Stage " and News Sheets published, and so the trunk of our tree came into being.

To-day we are a Society, not yet large, but with members in many parts of the world. These members, our branches, are at work. Several Regional Groups have been formed in various parts of England. This year, the London Group were able to offer hospitality to members attending the Easter Dance Conference, and gave a most enjoyable social evening to them too. Four Easter Conferences have been held where members have danced together, exchanged ideas and shared lectures and demonstrations upon the many sides of our work.

Is this not an encouraging review ? But we must not relax, for our Guild with its great motive must grow, and grow in depth and breadth. This word " grow " must take on a lively meaning for us in the immediate future —" do not let us sit back apathetically ", as I said in my 1951 Annual Report, " but hold on to what we have consolidated and then go forward with determined intent—each individual ' branch ' contributing his or her utmost to this our Guild."

G. E. M. STEVENS,

Honorary Secretary.

THE GUILD COUNCIL

During the past few years, we have been glad to welcome many new members to the Guild. For the benefit particularly of these, and also of all others who may find this information of interest, we print below a short biographical note of each member of the Guild Council.

Corporate Members

(1) *Full Members*

RUDOLF LABAN (see page 10).

SYLVIA BODMER had intended to become a teacher of mathematics, but when, as a schoolgirl she met Mr. Laban's approach to movement, and realised its possibilities for education, recreation and the stage, she decided to take up this work instead. She was interested not only in the practical aspects of the work, but in research into the fundamental elements of movement, the harmony of space, and kinetography, which together provide the foundations of the science of movement. She therefore left Switzerland, and became a pupil of Mr. Laban in Hamburg, where she participated in his movement-choir, joined his dance-group, taught, and subsequently gained the Laban Diploma.

Later, together with a colleague, she opened her own professional school for dancers and teachers in Frankfurt-am-Main, where she also ran a movement-choir attached to the Opera House and had a small dance group.

After her marriage and the birth of three boys, she discontinued, temporarily, active participation in the work, but still retained her interest in it, so that when she came to England in 1938, and again met Mr. Laban, she began working with him in Manchester. Later she joined the staff of the Modern Dance Holiday Courses, and of the Art of Movement Studio, and became one of the artistic directors of the Manchester Dance Circle. She also for some time ran the Young Dancers' Group whose programme was especially devised for children.

She was a founder member of the Guild of which she has been Vice-Chairman since its inception.

A. PROCTOR BURMAN worked with Mr. Laban from 1944-1948 making notes and diagrams which were to act as a basis for the teaching and practice of "Effort" in all English speaking countries, and devising a logical mathematical correlation of effort-graphs and movement diagrams. These notes later formed the foundation on which Mr. Laban built his published books on Effort.

On completion of these notes they made an experimental film illustrating efforts and shadow movements. Mr. Burman worked with Mr. Laban on preliminary investigations into dock work, parachute jumping and R.A.F. cadet work.

He is now a Management Consultant Engineer working in association with the firm of Paton Lawrence & Company, Management Consultants, and is Hon. Treasurer of the Guild.

F. C. LAWRENCE came to know Mr. Laban on the advice of Dr. (now Sir) William Slater who was Managing Director of Dartington Hall Ltd., when Mr. Lawrence was a Director of that Company.

In 1941, in Manchester, Mr. Lawrence, together with Mr. Laban, studied the problem of girls doing men's work, especially in lifting motor tyres and in processing them. As a result of training given by Mr. Laban and Miss Ullmann, the girls were able successfully to replace men in this work.

From this time onwards, Mr. Lawrence worked with Mr. Laban in many factories, and together they evolved the Laban-Lawrence method of selection of staff and workers, which has now been applied in many hundreds of cases. Mr. Lawrence has two companies: Paton, Lawrence & Co., and Paton, Lawrence Management Training, Ltd., which deal not only with problems of selection, but also with those of training.

Mr. Lawrence was one of the founder members of the Guild, of which he has been Vice-President since the beginning.

LISA ULLMAN became a member of the Laban Movement Choir in Berlin in 1925. She was, at that time studying painting, but decided to change her profession, and so took up full-time study at the Laban School in Berlin

In 1927, having gained her teaching certificate in the Laban method, she became assistant at Mr. Laban's "Choreographic Institute"— (Laban's central school), and in 1929, when this was transferred to Essen, she joined the staff there, after having obtained the Laban Diploma. In 1934, she left Germany with Kurt Jooss (at that time Director of the Laban Central School in Essen) for England, and became a member of staff of the Arts Department, Dartington Hall, teaching at the Jooss-Leeder School of Dance until its dissolution in the summer of 1940. At the same time she was representative of the "Archives Laban" in England. When Mr. Laban came to England himself she continued to work with him on his Archives, especially after the close-down of the Jooss-Leeder School. From then on she devoted much time to the study of the educational system and methods in this country, and herself lectured in many colleges, universities, and other educational institutions all over the country. In following up the work of the Plymouth and Exeter Movement Choirs which she had founded and privately conducted for teachers and the Workers Educational Association from 1935 on, she started children's movement choirs and courses in Wales, where she spent two years during the war.

In 1942 she went to Manchester, mainly to assist Mr. Laban in his industrial work, and in 1945 she consolidated the various professional and private courses which she had started, by creating the Art of Movement Studio, with Manchester as her headquarters. This became recognised by the Ministry of Education in 1948.

At the formation of the Laban Art of Movement Guild, Miss Ullmann was one of the founder members and was elected Chairman for life. For some years she has been an honorary member of the Ling Association, and has been guest lecturer and producer of drama for the British Drama League.

Apart from directing the Art of Movement Studio as a training centre

in the Laban methods, much of her time is devoted to research into the nature of movement, and to the practical application of the findings in therapeutical work and in artistic productions.

(2) *Sectional Art Member*

GERALDINE STEPHENSON trained at Bedford Physical Training College (1943-6) where she first came into contact with Modern Dance through Joan Goodrich. She then took a full training at the Art of Movement Studio, and while studying there became one of the members of a dance group which entered for the International Dance Festival in Copenhagen in 1947. She has attended numerous holiday courses, and has for the past three years been on the staff of the Modern Dance Holiday Courses.

Miss Stephenson is now on the staff of the Art of Movement Studio, and of the Bedford Civic Theatre (Director: Esme Church). She has given solo dance recitals at various colleges and theatres, has been a member of the Guild from the start and is on the committee of the Manchester Dance Circle.

(3) *Graduate Members*

MARJORIE ALLEN was first introduced to Modern Dance at classes taken by Diana Jordan. From 1942-6 she attended a part-time evening course for teachers held by Miss Ullmann in Manchester, and also attended various holiday courses.

As an assistant teacher in a secondary modern school in Manchester, she took dance throughout the school, and has now taken up the post of Lecturer in Post-Primary Education and Geography at Manchester Day Training College.

Miss Allen was a founder-member of the Guild, and also of the Manchester Dance Circle.

MARJORIE BERGIN first met Modern Dance at classes taken by Lilla Bauer in London in 1941, since when she has attended many holiday and refresher courses, and completed four terms' training at the Art of Movement Studio, including the first full-time Ministry of Education Course to be held in this work (1948-9).

She has been a member of the Guild since its formation, and of its London Regional Group.

Miss Bergin is at present deputy headmistress at a secondary modern school in Ealing, where she specialises in dance, and also takes classes for teachers.

ELSIE PALMER is one of the original small group of people who felt the need for the formation of an organisation such as the Guild, and has therefore been a member from its inception.

She is interested particularly in the educational aspects of the Art of Movement, and during the past eleven years has introduced this work into schools in Manchester and in Lancashire County, and has organised teachers' courses of all kinds, under the direction of Miss Ullmann. She is at present

Senior Organiser of Physical Education for Lancashire, and has initiated in the schools various experiments, one of which is being filmed.

Miss Palmer is also one of the original members of the Manchester Dance Circle, of which she has been Chairman since its inception in 1943. She has served on the Membership Committee of the Guild from the beginning, and also acts as Hon. Assistant Secretary.

ANTHEA PLATT in 1942 first met Lisa Ullman's work at numerous courses in the north of England. From 1943-6 she was a member of the Manchester Dance Circle, and from 1944-5 worked with Miss Ullmann on the staff of Avery Hill Training College. She has attended Modern Dance Holiday Courses from 1943 onwards and in 1946 undertook the special "Travelling School" training course.

Miss Platt joined the Guild at its foundation and has been since then a member of the Council and of the Publications Committee. She is at present working at Eastbourne with students training as teachers in all types of schools.

GLADYS E. M. STEVENS first came into contact with the Art of Movement in 1942, since when she has attended various holiday and weekend courses, and a part-time evening course lasting four years, taken by Miss Ullmann, in the training of teachers for work in schools.

She has served on the committee of the Manchester Dance Circle since 1943, and for the past five years has acted as its Vice-Chairman. She was one of the founder members of the Guild of which she has been Hon. Secretary since its inception in 1946.

Miss Stevens is headmistress of a Junior Mixed School in Manchester where she has taught Movement since 1943. At present, students from the Art of Movement Studio are experimenting with her in her school.

KATHLEEN TANSLEY first became interested in movement as we know it at classes taken by Louise Soelberg in Birmingham in 1940, since when she has attended numerous holiday and refresher courses, and completed a year's training at the Art of Movement Studio under the first full-time Ministry of Education Course (1948-9).

She has been a member of the Guild since its inception, of the Birmingham Contemporary Dance Club and of the Midlands Dance Group. Two years ago she started the Junior Midlands Group, where children from different schools meet at regular intervals to dance together.

Miss Tansley is at present specialising in the Art of Movement at a girls' school in Kidderminster, and at Shenstone Training College.

(Owing to lack of space, biographical notes of Associate Members are being held over till the next issue.—Editor.)

WHAT HAS LED YOU TO STUDY MOVEMENT ?

answered by R. Laban

This question has been put to me many times. The Publications Committee of the Guild has suggested that I should answer it now for publication. I will try to recollect a few stepping stones of this arduous path, but they will inevitably lead me up to the present moment because the impetus to study movement is a steady stream which goes flowing on and on. The fact is, that such an idea does not explode in your head at a given moment, but is a string of events which drive you along the way of destiny.

It is, however, also true that the natural impetus will be much stronger if the first opportunity to do such an unusual thing is the answer to an inner drive or hope. To describe early hopes of more than fifty years ago without falsifying them is very difficult. But there is, I think, something which has remained the same during my long life. This is the conviction that human beings should be more discerning with their efforts than they generally are. They think too little of that special aspect of effort which is the recovery of spent energy. The consequence of such lack of consideration is not only personal exhaustion and misery but also the lamage done to other people by dragging them into the orbit of disbalanced frenzy. There exists a wonderful source of learning something about the balance between effort and recovery and this is a well-spent leisure time. I gathered very early that it is the harmony of movement in leisure-time activities which is one of the main carriers of inner freedom and liveliness. I became therefore especially interested in movement and dance.

When I was a child, peasant dances, religious processions, court ceremonials and similar movement manifestations were still alive in my home country. They were not only alive, but an integral part of social existence. If one grows up surrounded by people to whom forceful and gay, solemn and deeply felt, leisure-time activity is an important part of life, one cannot fail to be impressed by the richness of such events. The expectation of the next seasonal or religious festivity irradiates into the appreciation of purely aesthetic entertainments such as theatrical performances. The theatre becomes thus one of the flowers in the garland of festive enjoyment which adorns life. Work itself was in those happy times and places accompanied by plenty of singing and gaiety. Everybody was proud to carry the body well during work and to do the skilled working movements in a definite rhythm. There was a great variety of bodily movement in work, and one was glad to have the opportunity to perform it in a sensible and meaningful manner. For someone with eyes and ears for this kind of beauty, it was impossible to miss the great importance of movement in life.

But there was also a certain anxiety in my early experiences, because I felt the relatively quick decay through the impact of modern civilisation. I remember that in my early artistic dreams I saw the penetration of mechanised work and industry as a monster engulfing the lovely dances

and the splendid body attitudes of people into a dark and drudging mechanicality and angularity. I remember when the gaily painted boat-bridge over the half-mile wide Danube was open for the passage of barges full of chanting peasantfolk on a pilgrimage, still more colourful than the bridge. And the men who rowed beside the boats constituting the passage-gap sang also and had laughing, vigorous faces. Then a huge steel and concrete suspension bridge was built and the flowery boat-bridge disappeared, and pilgrims took the dirty train over the new bridge. But this was not all. I had the opportunity to observe the workmen toiling on the new bridge. Huge cylinders of iron were sunk into the very deep river and there was no more song on the lips of the labourers who descended into these dreadful tubes. Some of them were pulled out, half-fainting, with greenish faces, and there was no energy left for gay dancing. I saw movement and liveliness deteriorate, while they were still alive several hundred miles to the East, where I had the good luck to travel frequently with my parents. The dark monster of modern civilisation advanced slowly like a sleepy dragon towards those happier countries. I saw the last vestiges of religious dances in Europe. The life of the Mohamedan population of the Balkans was at this time an Oriental fairy tale. Part of it was in the monasteries of the dancing Dervishes, whose performances had not yet degenerated into an entertainment industry for strangers but were still genuine acts of worship. I got access to these rituals through a temporary tutor of mine, an "Imam" (Mohamedan priest). He was the only learned man on a vast high plateau in the mountains where my father was stationed. My talks with this man belong to the unforgettable treasures of my mind. We talked about the wisdom, the dignity and happiness of man and he told and showed me a lot about the dancing and the exercises in religious rituals. Back I came to my homeland, where the dark paws of the machine age dragon advanced step by step in crushing the gaiety and colourful solemnity of the people.

But there was still the theatre. From my fourteenth year on I had free access to the stage of the municipal theatre in Bratislava, where in turn Czech, Hungarian, Austrian and Italian companies gave performances of opera, drama and ballet. I took art lessons with the stage painter and when he became ill and died I helped his son in the design and execution of decor and costume. Soon I became a kind of voluntary stage-manager and had to arrange, when seventeen years old, a large festival of "living pictures" representing the history of my native town. The occasion was the Emperor's visit and I made—as a great innovation—the living pictures move and inserted national dances into them. The performers were the notabilities of the town with their families, including my own kinsfolk.

My dreams were however of another kind. The theatre started to lose the flavour of one of the flowers in the garland of the general festive spirit. More and more commercialised, it seemed to me to become one of the slaves of the machine-age dragon, the killer of primeval joy. The new theatre of which I dreamt should be—I thought—the representative of primeval joy and serenity, a means to keep these valuable gifts of mankind alive. I devised a ritualistic composition which I called "The Swinging

Cathedral," parts of which I had in later years the opportunity to produce on the stage. At this time, towards the end of the last century, there was of course not the slightest posibility of bringing out such a work. I dreamt of movement which nobody could perform. Much, much later this style of movement became almost popular—it is what is to-day called modern dance.

I had to write down my vision and so I invented my Kinetography (movement notation) which is to-day fairly wide-spread, though used for quite different purposes. Balanchine notates his ballets in this way, and recently the kinetographic notation of the American musical comedy "Kiss Me Kate," has been sent over to London and rehearsed there from the script.

I dreamt also of a new kind of theatre building, which brought me early to Paris where I studied architecture at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts.

The idea of investing the common dragon of the machine-age with some dignity germinated much later in my mind. All I knew was that this could only be possible through the cultivation of movement and dance. I regard one of my deeds as characteristic of my mental trend, and this was the Cortege of Crafts and Industries which I arranged in Vienna in 1927. On mobile platforms mounted on four hundred lorries, ten thousand craftsmen and workmen performed their customary trades, songs and dances. The cortege filled the whole stretch of seven miles along which it proceeded. This giant serpent was destined to call the attention of the world to the movement, richness and beauty of the industrious population filling this dying city after the catastrophe of the first world war. The machine-age dragon did not take much heed of this rather tiny snake but preferred to develop into the herald of the atomic age in the second world war.

Shortly before this second debacle of human joy and serenity, I made the attempt to collect a thousand members of my movement choirs from sixty large towns for a festival celebrating the hope of a new "nip in the air." I was very mistaken in choosing an otherwise suitable place, an open-air theatre in Berlin, for this purpose. The political atmosphere led to a prohibition of the final performance after successful dress rehearsals watched by 25,000 people.

All these and many other similar festivals of smaller extent, as well as my educational work in many schools and movement choirs, and finally also my attempts to improve working movements in factories and to use movement for therapeutic purposes, have only become possible through the introduction of kinetography or movement notation.

The written score of a movement composition is something similar to a musical score or the text of a drama. Short sequences of movement exercises can also be recorded in this way. The main thing, of course, is the content. One can notate with kinetographic signs, as well as with words, things which are valuable or valueless for the community.

One of the essential discoveries which arose from the study of movement is that of the crystalline structure of man's movement possibilities. I found this out very early, probably because I had the opportunity to observe so many different sorts and styles of movement. I saw that people, in spite

of their differences of race and civilisation, had something in common in their movement patterns. This was most obvious in the expressions of emotional excitement. I observed that in these patterns certain points in space around the body were specially stressed. In joining these points, I arrived at a regular crystal form. Later, I identified this crystal as an icosahedron, one of Plato's so-called "ideal" crystals, that means a form in which no mineral of any kind ever crystallises.

Man is inclined to follow the connecting lines of the twelve corner points of an icosahedron with his movements in travelling as it were along an invisible network of paths. The curious thing is, that travelling along some of these paths produces harmonious and serene or gay feelings and impressions, while the following of other paths evokes feelings and impressions of anger, unhappiness and disharmony. I have since investigated the relationship between the harmony of movement patterns in dance and that of tone patterns in music, and have found the most amazing correspondence between the two.

A quarter of a century later, when the "ideal" crystallisation process of dance movement was mentioned in a lecture, a chemist came up and said that a couple of years earlier it was discovered that protein—that important ingredient of living matter—crystallises in icosahedroid form.

Is this chance coincidence, or do we use in our movement the drive of the protein in our own bodies towards crystallisation? However this may be, it is sure that the corner points of the icosahedron have proved to be an excellent means of recognising and ordering the basic directions used in human movement. Several generations of students of movement and dance have now learnt to master bodily expression and also mental attitudes, through the conscious traffic along the mysterious network of crystalline shapes within the icosahedron.

I have also frequently been asked what the symbol on the head of the notepaper of my Archives means. It is simply the stylised form of a human figure extending his limbs within an icosahedron. The first art of movement studio in this country, created and directed by Lisa Ullman, is authorised to use this symbol, which I have designed, on all publications and papers. It was my great pleasure to give permission to the L.A.M. Guild to use this symbol when they expressed the wish to do so.

The study of the crystallinity of movement gives understanding of the natural harmony of movement. It is this harmony, in my opinion, by which the enjoyment and deep penetration of recreational and festive movement is best vouchsafed.

The beauty and simplicity of this harmony has always touched me profoundly. It is this which has led me to study movement and to explore the significance of this means of human expression.

EDITOR'S NOTE. On Sunday, July 22nd, 1951, the subject of the *Observer's* weekly feature "Profile" was Rudolf Laban.

It was at first intended to publish this in the News Sheet, but on receipt of the above article written by Mr. Laban himself, which is both complete and authentic, it was decided that the other was redundant.

EASTER CONFERENCE, 1951

Secretary's Report

The Easter Conference of 1951 gave pleasure, alas, only to a few members. Last year almost fifty people attended. This year only thirty came. This was due to: (*a*) lack of time on part of members; (*b*) lack of money (several people wrote to the secretary apologising for absence on these two counts); (*c*) the fact that immediately following the Conference was a course in London where Mr. Laban and Miss Ullmann were teaching. Who could resist such nectar? Several members held themselves in reserve for this and so did not attend the Conference.

The programme was varied and interesting, and in order that the groups might not prove too large to handle on the Art side it was decided to divide them into two. As numbers were small the Secretary felt that this gave an impression of thinness. But this was not felt by members. On the contrary, a pleasing intimacy and sense of unity was the result.

A social evening arranged by the London Group, to which all members of the Conference were invited, was the first venture of its kind, welcome not only for itself and the pleasure it gave to all, but also for the evidence it shows that the Regional Groups of the Guild are both alive and active. Our grateful thanks to Mrs. Shepherd for her kind hospitality on this occasion.

We must ask ourselves as we look forward to 1952, should our conference take on an entirely different form? It has been suggested that, in order not to clash with the Easter course, the annual conference might be held in February, and that a residential week-end might be tried as an experiment. The Secretary would welcome your thoughts and feelings upon this, in the very near future.

PRACTICAL SESSIONS

To those members of the Laban Art of Movement Guild who were fortunate enough to be free to attend this year's Easter Conference, the two practical sessions gave the greatest delight. A friendliness and contentment, which are happily common to these gatherings, pervaded the room as Veronica Tyndale-Biscoe started off an eager group of dancers.

What fun it was to be one of a class again, as we gathered and scattered, twisted and turned, dancing those turns at last in harmony with a partner to our own varying rhythms and patterns! If there were some of us who felt a little giddy as we finished, it in no way detracted from our sense of enjoyment and feeling of gaiety as the class came to an end.

Equally enjoyable was the second session, where our meeting and withdrawing was skilfully brought to a common rhythm, and where, with Ada Heynssen's unfailingly pleasing accompaniment, and Miss Tyndale-Biscoe's many varied suggestions to guide, partners danced with the happy abandon which they felt.

The sessions concluded with a sincere vote of thanks to leader and pianist for two very enjoyable classes.

VIOLET A. WILMOT.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY IN THE HOME

On the first afternoon of the Conference, we were all delighted by the unusual and highly stimulating talk given by Mrs. Loeb. Our curiosity had already been aroused by the many and varied "exhibits" of which we had caught glimpses when passing the hall at the end of the morning. They had all been so carefully and beautifully arranged and it was obvious that much time and thought had been given to their presentation. All came up to expectations, and we were shown countless ways of passing the hours in profitable occupation.

Mrs. Loeb introduced us to the principles of "occupational therapy" in the home, and the many examples of art and craft on show had all been produced by Mrs. Loeb, her family and friends, and most had been done during periods of illness or similar stress.

The articles and pictures produced were wholly delightful. Here were woven scarves in the most beautifully blended, and—as we were later to learn—highly significant colours; delicate models; photographs showing touches of the expert; basketry, needlework and many pictures of artistic merit and great psychological interest. In addition to all this, and in spite of an obviously painful and hampering leg injury, Mrs. Loeb gave us a most sincere dance interpretation, which added greatly to the interest of her talk.

Mrs. Loeb impressed us all with her conviction that this type of occupation can bring great relief to those in any way mentally disturbed, and can indeed bring a measure of calm and fulfilment to all seeking relaxation in these hectic and worrying days. One's only regret on leaving was the reflection that in the scramble of everyday life more time cannot be found to emulate Mrs. Loeb, and find the sense of achievement and peace which undoubtedly springs from creature effort of this kind.

DOROTHY HORNBY.

LECTURE DEMONSTRATION

1. Observing an industrial operation

2. Assessing a candidate's ability for a job

An interesting lecture-demonstration was given by Mr. Lawrence, Mr. Ellis and Mr. Warren Lamb on movement as a means of selecting a candidate for a job. Mr. Lawrence took the part of the chairman of the selection committee, Mr. Ellis was the candidate, in this case for the job of drying cups in a factory canteen, and Mr. Warren Lamb observed the candidates and made the effort assessment.

Mr. Lawrence had previously explained that the observation of movement efforts came in two categories, which might be termed "manual" or movements used in doing a job, and "non-manual" such as movements observed during an interview. The effort assessment can be made from the two types of movement which together showed, in the inter-relation of mind and body, the candidate's capability and suitability for any given job.

Warren Lamb showed how the accurate observation and writing of movement efforts gives an objective factual recording of what takes place. The movements are later grouped in certain categories, and conclusions can be drawn from them. The candidate is observed in his functional activity, in his body attitudes, and in his small expressive or shadow movements.

In the demonstration given, we all observed Mr. Ellis come in to the interview, put his hat down, sit on a chair, accept and light a cigarette. Then we watched him drying a number of cups, and we tried to observe how he used the drying cloth, and how he held and moved his hand on the cup. Mr. Lawrence asked a number of questions such as why he was applying for the job, and what he liked doing in his spare time, and we watched his body attitudes as he listened and made his replies.

At the end, Warren gave us some idea of the assessment he had made; where the candidate had perhaps made unnecessarily big movements which might delay him in his work, and where he was either too strong or too light. Altogether approximately eighty to a hundred efforts were written down, generally in rhythms of three or four. He showed us how, for example, lightness might be discovered ten times in shadow movements and possibly only once in functional actions, and how strength perhaps might be found in body-attitude and not in functional action.

We also heard from Mr. Ellis of an interesting experiment in a factory which employed one hundred and fifty girls in packing penicillin into small vials. The standard set was three thousand vials a day for each worker. On a group of girls interviewed and assessed with the Laban movement efforts for this work, one third showed themselves "suitable," another third "trainable," and one third "unsuitable" for the task. Some of the "trainable" girls were given a course in movement, and after this their standard at once went up from 2,470 to 2,950 vials a day, and this without undue fatigue, and with greater satisfaction in their work.

An animated discussion followed the demonstration and ended a most illuminating and interesting morning.

MOVEMENT CHOIR

The final session of the Conference was spent in the most fitting manner possible—in dancing together.

Sylvia Bodmer took for her theme syncopation in movement. The movement phrase upon which the dance was built, combining so skilfully subtlety with simplicity, was delightful to do, and as the group formation gradually evolved, and one met different people at each new stage of the

dance, the feeling of "togetherness" grew, until when we finally had to stop (owing to lack of breath as well as of time) we felt that we had had a really satisfying experience.

So ended an exhilarating, thought-provoking and altogether enjoyable Conference.

PERSONALIA

Details of Membership

We welcome to the Guild the following new Associate Members:

Marjorie Bell	London
Dorothy Butcher	Middlesex
Jennifer Coigley	Kent
M. E. Garthe	London
Mrs. Haffenden	Manchester
Eileen Hardwick	Sheffield
R. M. Lenel	London
R. Paske	Surrey
R. Rurka	London
Dorothy Whiston	London

Congratulations to:

Cecilia Bagley	Blackpool
Joan Heath	Middlesex
Dorothy Hornby	Middlesex
Margot Spence	Dolgelly
Kathleen Tansley	Birmingham

who have become Graduate Members; and to

Lorn Primrose

who has become a Sectional Education Member.

NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

Bristol

(*Representative:* Ena Glide, 26 Glena Avenue, Knowle, Bristol, 4)

The Bristol Dance Group has just completed its second season. In spite of all the illness, weekly meetings have continued throughout the winter, members of the group taking turns to lead the class.

On March 1st, Mr. Vaughan Davies, now music adviser to the Bristol Education Committee spent two hours with us talking about music for dancing, and playing to us.

Veronica Tyndale-Biscoe paid us an unexpected visit one week, and we are hoping to arrange a meeting next season when she will lead the group and Mr. Vaughan Davies will play.

Most of the time we have worked without music, and these classes have sometimes been even more enjoyable than those with a pianist.

We are fortunate in having Ursula Bevir near us. She has given us great help and encouragement throughout.

We are looking forward to further weekly meetings this autumn.

London

(*Secretary:* Hilda Brumof, 37 Adamson Road, London, N.W.3)

During 1951 we have continued to meet on the first Wednesday evening each month, and have had a very varied programme.

In January, Ernst Berk gave an interesting talk and stimulating demonstration with drums and tympani illustrating dance rhythms, opportunity being given at the end for members of the group to play the instruments, which they did with great enthusiasm.

In February, an extremely clear and comprehensive account of her work with students at the school was given by Lizzie Pisk, Movement and Dance Instructor at the Old Vic Theatre School.

Our March meeting took place during the week when Mr. Laban and Miss Ullmann were holding a course in London, and several members of the course came along as visitors. We were most fortunate to be able to have Mr. Albrecht Knust as guest lecturer. He gave a combined talk and demonstration on Group Formations. His inexhaustible fund of ideas, together with his vitality and charm of manner held both participators and audience entranced. It was indeed a refreshing and novel experience for us all.

Ronnie Curran of British Dance Theatre took a practical class at our April meeting, and in May we had the pleasure of seeing a programme of solo dances by Peggy Rowlands in which she gave her personal interpretation of some Negro Spirituals to records made by Paul Robeson. Afterwards, some of the members present improvised group dances to two other such records.

In June, Adda Heynssen gave a talk on musical composition for modern dance, illustrating it in her usual masterly way. She played some of her own compositions for various dances, one called "The Scarecrow" being particularly appreciated. The talk was followed by a lively discussion.

Our July meeting was a business one at which we reviewed the year's activities and discussed future plans. A small committee was elected.

We should like to thank Lilian Harmel for her kindness in giving us the use of her studio for our meetings.

Manchester

(*Secretary:* H. Kamberian, Ladybarn Road, Fallowfield, Manchester)

The Manchester Dance Circle has completed another successful year with an increase in the number of its members. A well-attended practical class was held weekly from September, 1950, to June, 1951, and our grateful thanks are due to Sylvia Bodmer and Geraldine Stephenson not only for their inspiring tuition but also for their unfailing interest and encouragement. The classes were greatly enjoyed and the varied types of studies and dances learnt were much appreciated.

A number of associate meetings were held during the year and we again thank Mrs. Bodmer most warmly for her generous hospitality. On one occasion a delightful musical programme was given by Geraldine Stephenson

at the piano, and by Gerald Bodmer on the clarinet. At another meeting Edna Fidler gave a most stimulating lecture on the link between Movement and Art.

The Christmas party was another happy evening in which, as well as a sale, we had a programme of dances by members of the Art of Movement Studio, together with a group dance in which we all joined.

A children's festival of dance was well attended by many visitors as well as by members of the circle. Several groups of children showed their work, and all present participated with enthusiasm in a lively group dance led by Sylvia Bodmer.

We would like to thank Miss Kamberian, our secretary, for nobly holding the fort for us in spite of the numerous difficulties engendered by the many changes of assistant secretary and treasurer during the year.

Midlands Area

(*Representative :* Kay Tansley, c/o The Grange, St. Mary's Street, Kidderminster)

In September, 1950, a combined meeting of the Midlands Dance Group and the Midlands Regional Group of the Guild was held. The programme consisted of a most enjoyable practical session with Betty Meredith-Jones, a business meeting at which it was decided to combine the above two groups, and finally a theatre outing.

In December, at a business meeting, a temporary committee was set up and tentative plans made for two future meetings.

The first of these took place in February, 1951, and consisted of two practical sessions taken by Geraldine Stephenson ; the first, in happy vein, was danced in groups, and the second, in more thoughtful mood, singly. The contrast was delightful, and the whole afternoon much appreciated. All are looking forward to another session with Gerry. At a business meeting on the same day, a committee was formed.

In March, we embarked upon our most ambitious venture to date: a training weekend, taken by Betty Meredith-Jones, at which both on Saturday and on Sunday twenty-seven people were present, including students, primary and secondary teachers, and college lecturers. The two discussion sessions were very lively and most useful. The whole weekend was extremely valuable and everyone felt that Betty had not spared herself and that all had gained in experience of Movement.

It is with regret that we have to announce that our representative, Eileen Akester, has left the area, but we should like to thank her for her work and offer her our good wishes for her new appointment.

A most enjoyable meeting was held on June 23rd, when Betty Meredith-Jones came to give us a class on " Period Dances ". We are most grateful to her for all the help she has given our group and the interest she has shown from the start. We should also like to mention here our pianst, Miss D.

Grant, who gives her time so willingly. We realise how very fortunate we are in this respect.

May I appeal to all members in the Midlands to give the Group their utmost support? If the work is to flourish, individual members must rally round the Regional Groups.

TELEVISION

The suitability of television as a medium for the viewing of dance, whether of a group or of a solo dance is a much-discussed question.

On May 21st, 1951, one of our own Guild members, Geraldine Stephenson, was televised in a solo dance "The Dream". The two following accounts give impressions of this programme: the first by two members who had not previously seen this dance performed in the flesh; the second by someone who had seen it many times.

(1).—As we had not thoroughly read our *Radio Times* it was with delighted surprise that we recognised Geraldine Stephenson when we switched on the television set a few minutes late for a programme of dance. Because we missed the start, and spent some time in identification, we do not feel well qualified to give a balanced opinion of what we saw. These, however, were our impressions.

We instantly realised that here was something different from the usual television dance programme. We had an interpretation of a dream which gained, we felt, not only from the fact that we had but one person to watch, which gave a clarity not yet attained by a group on the T.V. screen, but also because of the full use made of the body as an instrument of expression. The gradual increase of tension came through very clearly, and this was enhanced by the unusual character of the accompaniment.

We were intrigued by the use of the icosahedron, which seemed to us most adequately to convey the "bound" feeling experienced in dreams.

The cameras did not fully do justice to this otherwise satisfying performance. As is so often the case in programmes showing movement, both on T.V. and the cinema, the cameras showed a certain restlessness, and full sequences of movement were sometimes broken by shots from different angles.

Although we know that the dancer herself felt hampered by lack of space, this was not apparent to the viewer. We did not see the original performance, and are therefore not aware of the adaptations which were undoubtedly necessary before presenting the dance on T.V. We can only say that it was the most enjoyable and least cramped performance of any we have yet witnessed, and we hope it will not be long before other such programmes are arranged.

DOROTHY HORNBY and JOAN HEATH.

(2).—One of the most interesting of Geraldine Stephenson's solo dance compositions, "A Dream", was the subject of an experimental telecast on May 21st, 1951.

The dream world—which knows no limitations of time, space or personality—has given her an opportunity for weaving a sound and movement pattern, consisting of a very interesting musical score composed by herself, and a narrative dance in which many typical dream happenings can be recognised.

In attempting to detail a series of events, a dancer has certain severe limitations, in that his movement is generalised and he has no exact synonym for such things as "a blue sky", "a black pit", "the sixteenth century", etc. To differentiate between an abstract dance (a pure effort-space design) and a dramatic dance, something extra is needed to set the right atmosphere and to ensure that the spectator visualises it from a dramatic dance angle. Often it is the costume which does the trick, sometimes lighting alone is sufficient; in "The Dream" it is the skilful composition of effects, vocal sounds and piano, which draws the spectator from a mood of uneasy drowsing to the headlong flights and black abysses of nightmare.

From the first moment the sound-composition surrounds the audience with the appropriate atmosphere—beginning with a stubborn mechanical ticking, which is joined by a distant whispering staccato of voices—these grow to a soft howling, developing then to a pattern of barely articulated words—an eerie chorus calling, repelling and demanding, creating a mesh of terror and reaching a point of terrifying intensity as the first piano note sounds.

The purpose of this article is to discuss the television presentation of this dance, and here we encounter a new element apart from the original sound-movement composition. This is the element of décor, in which I include all visual effects other than the dancer's movements and costume. There were as follows:

1. All the visual effects created by camera-angles, the use of close-ups and recession, fades, etc.
2. The dancer was transported into "outer space" either by obliterating the stage beneath her feet, or more simply by keeping the feet below the vision-frame.
3. Clouds and passing vapours were superimposed by photographic-projection and by a film strip of smoke.
4. The icosahedron appeared in the distance, turning, advancing and growing to fill the entire screen.

Now the art of T.V. is the art of visual effects, and to use it purely as an instrument for relaying a stage performance in its original state, is to deny its potentiality as an art-medium. In this instance it is certain that the T.V. treatment resulted in a completely fresh interpretation of the dance. This embroidery and adaptation of the original is justified in so far as its unity and intention are preserved, and it is on this basis that I make the following criticisms.

1. The use of different camera-angles, the changes from close-up to deep recession were wholly effective as they aided the three-dimensional preception of the dance.
2. The absence of a "floor" destroyed many important tensions created by the sculpture of body-angles with the horizontal. The dance is

full of triangles, which lean out and become progressively more unstable, and these simply ceased to exist, thus muting the psychological impact.

3. In the stage version the dancer wears a costume of transparent irregular drapes, constructed alternately to veil and to reveal the body, and which create a plastic, changing sculpture in relation to the movement of the dancer. In the T.V. version this is replaced by the fitting bodice and long flared skirt which, in different colours and materials has become the uniform for modern dancers; and photographically projected clouds and drifting vapours are substituted in place of the cloud-shapes of the moving drapery. Whereas the long tunic is indeed unbeatable for abstract compositions, it cannot carry that extra atmosphere so necessary in a dramatic dance: and while the substance of the clouds was ideal "stuff that dreams are made of", their movement was often a distraction. They drifted in a constant horizontal and would have been more effective if composed in relation to the dancer's space-directions. The direction and amount of light used was good, and the occasional blacking-out of the dancer by heavy bands of clouds was extremely evocative.
4. The ico-skeleton first appeared like a tiny mechanical toy—it was somehow too concrete against the misty scene, turning like a merry-go-round in one direction. More imaginatively used it could have been an ideal object for increasing the power of the dream. But I do not wish to infer that all T.V. producers should have an intimate knowledge of space-harmonies. Its very appearance marked the surrealist character of dreams, and I shall not easily forget the vivid stirring moment where the ico-skeleton, grown to the full space of the screen, became a cage with the imprisoned dancer hammering desperately against its bars.

In conclusion it must be said that, for this viewer, all the exciting invention of the television treatment was outweighed by the disappointments arising from its failure to preserve the unity and intention of the original composition. But one thing that it proved, beyond all else, is that television offers enormous scope to dancers, and we shall welcome any future experiment in the screening of dance programmes.

MARY ELDING.

MODERN DANCE HOLIDAY COURSE, AUGUST, 1951

The annual Modern Dance Holiday Course, from August 14th-28th, 1951, took place at Foxhole School, Dartington, once more so kindly made available by the Headmaster, and the Dartington Hall Trustees.

The staff comprised Diana Jordan, Sylvia Bodmer, Geraldine Stephenson, Veronica Tyndale-Biscoe, Sheila Aste, and Joan Russell, with Adda Heynssen and Phyllis Holder as pianists. It was a great disappointment to find that Mr. Laban and Miss Ullmann were not at the course,

but everyone was glad to hear that they had at last found the opportunity to have a real holiday. We were also very sorry to hear that our secretary, Ursula Bevir, was unable to come owing to illness. We wish her a speedy recovery, and offer our hearty thanks to Yvonne Greenwood and Eugenie Fraser for so kindly and capably filling the breach.

As last year, students came from many different countries, including for the first time, France and Israel; and an ever-wider range of professional interests were represented, such as teaching, medicine, psychology, acting, music, architecture and modelling. A larger number of men students than previously attended this year and added considerably to the general liveliness.

Morning sessions were devoted to classes in basic movement, movement observation and dance training, for which students were divided into groups according to previous movement experience, an arrangement which was tried out last year, and found to be generally satisfactory.

For the afternoon and evening sessions, students chose between two alternatives: exploration of the various elements of movement expression, such as rhythmical sense, movement shapes, relationship of individuals in group work, and the use of sound and percussion; or participation in the composition which was to form the main part of the dance festival at the end of the course.

Additional interest and food for thought were provided by two lectures, one by Miss D. M. Hammonds, formerly a Chief Inspector at the Ministry of Education on "Drama as an Art," which, with her kind permission is reproduced on pages 26 — 33, and the other, which is reported elsewhere in the *News Sheet,* by Mr. Clegg, Chief Education Officer in the West Riding of Yorkshire.

The solo dance recital given by Geraldine Stephenson in the Barn Theatre of Dartington Hall was an event of very great interest; this, too, is more fully described on another page.

On the last day of the course students showed each other the various studies and dances on which they had been working; this occasion was marked by a happy, informal atmosphere, and a general lack of self-consciousness which have not always been present in former years. The final item was a dance-drama, "The Search," given by the "production group"; speech, song, music, percussion and silence were used to accompany the movement, and the whole combined to produce a most moving experience for both onlookers and performers.

The reluctance shown by everyone to leave at the end of the two weeks is evidence of the great enjoyment all had felt throughout the course.

SOLO DANCE RECITAL

given by GERALDINE STEPHENSON *in the Barn Theatre, Dartington Hall, during the Modern Dance Holiday Course, August,* 1951.

This recital was eagerly looked forward to, both by those who had seen Miss Stephenson's recital last year, and by those who had never seen her dance (except when taking a class!). The programme included the majority

of the dances seen last year, together with some new ones.

The programme was in four parts: "Maria," consisting of three dances of a lyrical and religious nature; "Magics," two lively and fantastic dances; "Plague," a cycle of three dances showing the reaction of a maiden, a nurse, and an old woman to the realisation that they are victims of the plague; and finally two contrasting dances, "The Challenge of the Dark," (which, as "The Dream," was televised in May, 1951), and "The Challenge of the Light." The whole programme was linked together by music chosen with great skill and artistry to create an atmosphere of the changing moods. Not only was all the choreography done by Miss Stephenson herself, but she also composed and recorded the music for many of the dances. In addition to these activities she is engaged in full-time teaching; truly remarkable evidence of talent, versatility, and sheer hard work.

Every seat in the Barn Theatre was taken, and many were standing. It is hard to say which of the dances was enjoyed most, but judging from the almost-tangible stillness emanating from the audience throughout the programme (except during "The Alchemist", when many a chuckle was heard) it is clear that Miss Stephenson had their whole-hearted participation —and what greater tribute can be paid to any performer than this?

A MESSAGE FROM FRANCE

I am the first French student who has come on a course in Mr. Laban's work, at Dartington Hall. I feel very proud and lucky! I had been hoping to have an opportunity of attending such a course ever since I read the interesting book by B. de Rothschild on "Modern Dance in the United States." Concerning the European influences of Martha Graham, Cunningham and other dancers there, she explained Mr. Laban's work.

On the course, I have discovered far more than I expected, and very deep meaning in the work. I hope I am bringing something new to my country. A window is open and fresh air may come through. The content of the work seems to me to reveal an understanding of movement very true and authentic; the use of the fundamental movements for any activity, dance, gymnastics, athletics, games, housework, can help us a great deal to enlarge our methods. Most people in France still believe it is no use dancing if you can't be on the stage!

The important experience I have had here has been through group work, when a common purpose is not devoted to an outside end (as in a game) but for itself; it may become a beautiful creative composition. Personality does not sink, but develops and increases confidence and self-control. This point is often neglected in French education, because we are too individual.

Regarding the learning, I was particularly interested in the way teachers and leaders taught; classes went on in such a cheerful atmosphere, most intense too, but never seemed too long although sometimes we felt tired. No superiors, no inferiors, no right, no wrong, so no feeling of inferiority: we had to correct ourselves, find our own way through. I did appreciate that no "personal remarks" were ever made, which is a true English

characteristic.

Finally I would like to say something about the atmosphere of the course; from morning when the bell rang, until evening after refreshments school seemed just as a hive. Everyone went along to the classes or other activities, and we could hear singing, talking, laughing . . . How tactful and kind the people were to each other—relationship seemed easy, and nice contacts were made, so helpful and enriching.

Although a foreigner, I felt at home the very first evening. (Of course as I come from Paris each one came along to tell me something nice about it. "I was there last year, went up the Champs Elysées, saw the beautiful shops" and so on.) It is nice having new friends in this world, and it doesn't happen so often!

Well, if I was the first French student on this course, I shall certainly not be the last. A fortnight was not enough to assimilate the profound and intense work we have been through. I hope Mr. Laban will soon have a course in Paris, or else I shall have to come again!

ELIETTE DE BEAUREPAIRE.

Report of a **TALK** *given by* **MR. CLEGG,** *Chief Education Officer of the West Riding of Yorkshire, at the Modern Dance Holiday Course, August, 1951.*

Knowing what a great deal of exciting experimental work has been going on in the West Riding of Yorkshire during the last few years, we were eager to listen to the man who had seen these things grow.

Mr. Clegg told us how he came to be interested in Modern Dance. Although his early experience of movement and of those who taught it was somewhat unfortunate, he recognised the value of Miss Jordan's work when he met it in Worcestershire. Reserving judgment in case it was just the quality of one personality, and something unattainable by less gifted teachers, his faith grew when he found other people achieving the same kind of results. A talk with Mr. Laban strengthened his faith.

By this time Mr. Clegg saw clearly that there were two conflicting theories in the presentation of movement training, and that these also showed in the teaching of other subjects, notably of Art: the one theory being concerned with teaching a technique, the other aiming at keeping alive the joy of creating, and at helping to retain the love of beauty so often blunted or killed by less sensitive teaching.

The value of the freer method in the teaching of Art struck him forcibly when seeing Dr. Burns' work in connection with Child Guidance in Birmingham, and Mr. Stone's work at Stewart Street School. Looking for examples in his own schools in the West Riding to increase his faith, he found a Primary School where extraordinary things were happening. The Head Master had been much influenced by the presentation of Art and Dance at a vacation course. Applying these principles to the teaching of Art in his own school, he found not only amazing things happening to the children's paintings, but to their whole way of living.

Mr. Clegg showed us some of the lovely drawings, vital, bold and individual, which were, as he put it, just illustrations of the fundamental

changes that were taking place in the children. Something was growing here that could not be measured by any intelligence test. Vital qualities were developing. This half century had placed a great emphasis on the development of intelligence and the superiority of those gaining high test marks, but there is now a growing realisation that Education is much more than instruction and the accumulation of testable knowledge. The expressive subjects have the greatest opportunity of developing most fully the children's personal qualities, and Movement, working directly and not through tool or paper, may be the most potent.

Knowing how satisfying had been our experience at Dartington, Mr. Clegg left us inspired with the determination to overcome all obstacles, and in some way to give those whom we teach the same satisfying experience.

MARIE K. WARD.

TALK ON "DRAMA AS AN ART"

Given by MISS D. M. HAMMONDS, *at the Modern Dance Holiday Course, August,* 1951.

I hope you will agree that I should not attempt to talk on how to act, or how to produce plays, or indeed, on how to teach, but, more exploringly, on what this art really is.

I suggest first that the most usual and obvious idea of drama is that it is a social function, a performance done by one group of people to entertain another group. Entertainment may rise to the highest realms of art, as in *King Lear* or *Oedipus Rex,* or it may sink to mean forms of exhibitionism, like performing seals. Within this great range are of course the Sixth Form producing *The Critic,* a Punch and Judy Show, *Tannhauser, Swan Lake,* the Passion Play at Oberammergau, or a Christmas Charade. All this you would agree is consciously produced drama, performed with the clear intention of displaying it to an audience, with all that that means.

But there is another aspect of drama altogether. Drama can be described as a sort of native function, a faculty which everyone possesses, a medium of human expression, perhaps the greatest. We can see this form of drama in the behaviour of young children just as we recognise it it in the rites of primitive people, in each case before a crust of social convention has grown over it. This expressive drama does not at heart contain the idea, so often associated with drama, of entertaining. It seems to arise in response to some urge within, and is associated with the experiences of life. In its simplest form it is just an outlet for strong emotion, such as that which prompts people to clap their hands or leap into the air, droop their heads, raise their eyebrows or turn down the corners of their mouths. It is significant that all these familiar ways of showing feeling are connected with movement, and they have prompted many common phrases in our language: "I jumped for joy" . . "he stood in awe" . . "she burst into tears" . . "he was cast down" . . lift these ordinary phrases into the realm of poetry and they at once assume a larger

beauty, but remain at bottom the same:

> " I will wash my hands in innocency " . . .
> " My heart leaps up when I behold
> A rainbow in the sky."
> " Leave wringing of your hands: peace, sit you down
> And let me wring your heart."

Though this dramatic outlet for feeling through movement is a commonplace of human behaviour, we can associate it with something even more deeply significant, a child's dramatic play, or the primitive ritual of an early race.

This, as far as we can explain it, seems to be more than an outlet. It is more like an effort of communication between a human being and the forces outside him. With a child and a savage alike there seems to be the same response to fear or dread, or to mysteries which cannot be understood. This leads to an idea that one can *make* things happen by doing them personally, a feeling that a personal dramatic action may achieve the wished-for result. I am speaking now of things which are really beyond comprehension. For a child they would be the inexplicable authority of elders and betters, the jealousy of other children, or perhaps such strange happenings as death or separation. These things a child can embody in dramatic play, experimenting, as it were, with the stuff of life, and in the play desired events can be made to happen. With primitive people the sources of anxiety were the winter and the spring, the fertility of the earth, the flooding of the waters. Nations might perish if the earth did not emerge from the cruel grip of winter, or if the springs dried up and failed to water the crops.

From this deep anxiety grew the idea of a scapegoat or sacrifice. The Old Year was killed in the form of a man; a young virgin was thrown into the Nile to make the banks overflow; special rain dances were performed to induce rain. And of course it was not surprising that after a time these savage ritual acts were performed in imitation instead of in reality. The victim did not really die but pretended to, and it was with profound satisfaction that the protagonists saw death pass into life, when the supposed dead man leapt to his feet. So, they hoped, would the spring leap into life after the winter was dead.

We have now only a dim idea of this deeply fundamental drama, and such relics as we possess are a little remote from our understanding, bemused as we are with scientific explanations of what goes on around us. But we do possess, in a garbled eighteenth century version, the strange old Revesby Sword Play, with its obvious enactment of death and resurrection. There is, too, the more familiar example of the Doctor in the Old Mumming plays, restoring to life the victims of St. George's Sword. Many old country plays show the character of the Dragon now merely absurd, but no doubt making a link for us with the terrible struggles of our forefathers with the cruel winter, which they would like to have seen destroyed in one blow by a hero with a sword.

Many versions of the spring and fertility festivals just survive, shorn

of all meaning. The May King and Queen, Jack in the Green, dances in a circle round a decorated pole all mean little enough to-day, and only faintly echo the delight and relief we all feel when the spring flowers appear, the longer days and the warmth of the sun. But only a few centuries ago the Puritan saw in these spring rites something so pagan and wicked that they did their utmost to stamp them out.

I think there is no need to remind you that all this is Drama itself. This mysterious function through which men assume a part in order to try to make things happen on which their lives depend, perhaps to live through their relationship with the outside world, is undoubtedly the fundamental dramatic action. We must base our understanding of drama on the basic idea that it is the expression of a human being's feeling about the mysteries of life. Jane Harrison in her book "Ancient Art and Ritual" makes this illuminating statement: "At the bottom of art, as its motive power and its mainspring, lies, not the wish to copy Nature or even improve on her, but rather an impulse shared by art with ritual, the desire, that is, to utter, or give out a strongly felt emotion or desire, by representing, making, or doing or enriching the object or act desired."

There is one inherent quality peculiar to the art of drama which is difficult to explain, but must be accepted. It may be described as impersonation, or personification; the idea of becoming, for the time being, something or someone else. As Jane Harrison wrote, it is not copying or even improving on nature, it is actually *uttering* a strongly felt emotion. One sees in this "impersonation" both the highest flights of imagination of which man is capable, and at the same time his profound limitations. The qualities of the fertility of the earth, the forces of evil, the great waters, the sun and the moon, are *not* the qualities of a human being, but in Drama a human being assumes these qualities and, with his limited powers, he expresses them.

During the course of my visits to schools I have often come across quite extraordinary examples of this imaginative impersonation by children. I remember two boys in a country school taking part in an activity called "dramatisation" in which they were called upon to take the parts of the two supernatural companions of a fairy-tale traveller, one, so the story said, *very* fat, the other *very* thin. Those children had nothing of any kind to help a theatrical effect, but by sheer effort and concentration they contrived in some mysterious way to incorporate the *idea* of fatness and thinness! It is a common experience to find children using their ordinary human faculties to make themselves into aeroplanes or engines or lions. It was with faith in such powers, now doubt, that Shakespeare wrote these lines, describing a person he expected an actor to portray:

> "All hail, great master, grave sir, hail! I come
> To answer thy best pleasure: be't to fly,
> To swim, to dive into the fire, to ride
> On the curl'd clouds; to thy strong bidding task
> Ariel, and all his quality."

Or these lines:

> " What are these
> So withered and so wild in their attire,
> That look not like the inhabitants of the earth
> And yet are on't? Live you? Or are you aught
> That man may question? You seem to understand me
> By each at once her choppy finger laying
> Upon her skinny lips. You should be women,
> And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
> That you are so. Speak if you can. What are you?"

If you grasp the full significance of this you will begin to realise that all drama has in it the element of magic. It is something which you at the same time, believe in, and do not believe in, something which does not just happen, like a clap of thunder, but which you make happen, like a roll of drums giving somewhat the same impact as thunder. In the same way an actor, a person whose dramatic faculties are more highly developed than those of other people, feels and does not feel the emotion he shows, at one and the same time.

> " What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba
> That he should weep for her?"

exclaims Hamlet about the player. But it was part of his contribution to the art of drama that this player's feelings brought tears to his eyes, made him turn pale and speak with a broken voice, all because of some woman called Hecuba who was a mere name to him. It is this curious mixture of belief and non-belief that enables us to sit complacently watching a terrible tragedy in the theatre; if we did not know in our hearts that it was art and not reality we could not endure it. A small boy of my acquaintance was asked by his father, when he was about ten, and had several younger brothers, whether he would like to be Father Christmas at the Christmas party. " You know, of course," said his father, " that I have always been Father Christmas, but now you are such a big boy I thought perhaps you would like to be this year." After a pause the little boy said, " I think I would rather go on believing in Father Christmas."

How well that describes this magic quality in drama. You will now remember Coleridge's famous phrase, " a willing suspension of disbelief," or in another essay, " a sort of temporary half faith," describing this very subtle emotion which drama evokes, an emotion directly inherited from its early beginnings.

I want now to come to an important turning point in the development of drama, that is, the appearance and formation of an audience, and its separation from the action. It was a vital stage in dramtic history when not *all* the tribe or *all* the village took part in a ritual dance or play. There would inevitably be stragglers, women with the care of young children, old men, the lame and the sick, and they sat on one side and watched. It is said that this kind of watching group first collected on the side of a hill so as to see better—a most significant position: think of it when you are next in the dress circle. This separation of performers and spectators had overwhelming results. It was inevitable that the audience would gradually wield

a more and more powerful influence on the action, until it was designed with them in view.

And when one says "designed," one implies a designer, some one who composes the action upon a given theme, and works its out so that it becomes intelligible to other people. The old rite takes on a permanent form: it can be learnt and repeated year after year. The best parts will be taken by the best exponents, people who can dance, sing and speak. The audience, though deeply involved in it all, becomes more and more separate, and naturally insists on some place from which they can obtain a good view. So the action is raised up, the spectators sit in tiered seats. Making a magic develops into creating an illusion, not so much to satisfy an inner impulse, but to mystify and surprise an audience. Now we have built up the idea of a play, with action, plot and dialogue, and a theatre with a stage and an auditorium. One sees how limitless are the possibilities of this dramatic art, for Art it has now become, and to this day there is still no end to it. And it is no exaggeration to say that every other art has been drawn in to enrich this powerful and comprehensive art of drama; literature, music and painting, architecture and building: the work of the actor, dancer, singer, and of craftsmen in every variety of material. And all this is to impress and please—an audience.

You will remember that I referred earlier in this talk to the Revesby Sword Play, and the fact that this old play can be read in a version dating from the eighteenth century. In the script of this play there occur these words, spoken by the leader of the players:

> "We are come for both bread and beer
> And hope for better cheer
> And something out of your purse, sir,
> We are all brave jovial boys
> And takes delight in Christmas joys."

So the old fertility rite has fallen into the hands of a theatrical company, prepared to play for money and beer. The performance is a commercial venture, and the deep feeling which originally prompted it is lost in the ages.

I do not want to leave on your minds the impression that the range of dramatic art, as I perhaps implied at first, is from the highest to the lowest from good to bad. On the contrary, drama of the highest quality has within it powerful variations, and I would like now to suggest, rather briefly of course, *two* of these variations. The first is the matter of purpose behind drama: the second, the theme within it.

Throughout the long panorama of dramatic product you will find I think two main purposes. Behind many, indeed most plays, the purpose is frankly to give pleasure, and what a varied emotion pleasure is! There is intellectual pleasure, such as *Hamlet* inspires, pleasure in excitement or suspense, as in *The Ringer* or *Judgment Day,* pleasure in the sentimental, as in *Quality Street,* in the fantastic as in *Harvey,* the heartily comic as in *Rookery Nook,* or the horrific as in *Night Must Fall.* And of course there is pleasure in lovely sound, in the endlessly beautiful verse and rhetoric of Shakespeare, the glittering words of Webster, the closely-knit phrases of

T. S. Eliot: or pleasure in glorious spectacle or magical lighting. It is with the purpose of giving such varied pleasure that plays are made.

The other outstanding purpose behind plays is to teach, and you will find it increases your enjoyment of playgoing if you can distinguish the artistic from the didactic, sometimes a very subtle distinction. This didactic purpose in plays almost preceded the giving of artistic pleasure in England, for while the people here were taking their pleasure in jugglers and tumblers, minstrels and tournaments and baiting animals, the early church saw in drama an instrument for instruction. They must have realised the strongly dramatic instinct which was still having an outlet in the spring and winter festivals, and no doubt argued that if you could impersonate the May King or the Dragon, you could impersonate God and His Saints, Abraham, Noah, Mary and Joseph, Christ Himself. This had a double effect. The people, for they were not professional actors then, identified themselves with these revered figures and at the same time learnt some valuable lessons about Creation and Judgment, Heaven and Hell, Sin and Punishment. The plays we know as Morality plays tried to do exactly the same thing, and used the same power of impersonation to put into human form Charity, Good Deeds, Pride, giving the actors wonderful opportunities to construct a character out of an abstraction which was not subtle but wholly good or wholly bad. These plays must have been the early predecessors of melodrama with the clear cut, black and white characters, the good man, the bad man, the innocent girl, the faithful servant. They all have the same quality of directness, giving an audience no trouble in taking sides. The early didactic Mystery and Morality plays did not rise up from the people, like the spring rites: they are written by anonymous playwrights who know their business very well and have a very clear idea as to how to make a direct impression on an audience. This was most important since the main objective was to teach, and when these plays became too theatrical and too entertaining they lost half their strict purpose and were no longer used by the Church. But they were early examples of a long line of didactic plays, aimed primarily at making people think, winning them over to a dogma or a party, influencing them to be more religious or more patriotic. The theatre is too good a pulpit not to be seized upon by propagandists, and for students of drama it is extremely interesting to consider whether this is or is not good art. One cannot altogether ignore the fact that the appeal of such work is negative. It is an attempt to establish a principle in opposition to natural feeling. It suggests something you *ought* to do or ought *not* to do, which is not what you want to do or want not to do. It emphasises duty, fear, obedience, rather than love, confidence, adventure.

Perhaps it would be true to say that the good didactic play is the one which states, but does not preach. We might compare the inescapable message of "Love on the Dole", or "Red Roses for Me", with the much more definite attack of "They Came to a City". In any case it is fascinating to savour the extreme difference between drama which is a natural human expression, and drama which is imposed from without. You will find it a very contemporary interest, for at this present time plays tend to be deeply symbolic and challenging, voicing no doubt all our present fears and doubts.

And now, a last word on the other ingredient in drama, the theme within it. By the theme I do not so much mean the story or plot, as the idea behind the story. To make this clear, I ask you to think of Cinderella, the story of the little drudge, repressed and baited by relations who, like Hamlet's, were little more than kin and less than kind. By the magic touch of a fairy, a truer relation than Cinderella's father and sisters, a god-mother indeed, she passed from unhappiness to love and prosperity, and lived happy ever after. Now this is an excellent example of a theme, in fact it is one of the great themes of the world. It comes up again and again in various disguises, but remains always the same. We call it in our modern jargon a "success" story, and few ideas give greater pleasure than to imagine that by some unexpected turn, by a "magic", the impossible can be achieved. "Why can we not be happy and devote ourselves to play?" wrote R. L. Stevenson in his essay on "Child's Play", and this is a theme which finds an echo in all our hearts.

You will discover, if you begin looking for them, that there are not a great many themes in plays, and that in comedy and tragedy alike they tend to repeat themselves. In general, the main theme of plays is of Man struggling with his difficulties. Man has always seemed to the dramatist to be set in a mystery; dangers and trials surround him, and though he sets out with the best intentions, he is thwarted at every turn. Why is this? There is no answer. "Man walketh in a vain shadow and disquieteth himself in vain: he heapeth up riches and cannot tell who shall gather them." So wrote the Psalmist on the same theme, and from him too we have that wonderful phrase, so full of meaning: "I am a stranger upon earth". A stranger, surrounded by aliens, not speaking the same language: so was Oedipus, so was Hamlet, so was Nora in "The Doll's House", so was Harry in "Family Reunion". The ancient writers of plays were inclined to call this force or mystery surrounding mankind and thwarting his designs—Fate. They surmise that a divine power grew jealous when men took matters too much into their own hands, and presumed to become great soldiers or powerful kings, and wreaked their anger and vengeance upon them. Did you see Rattigan's play "Adventure Story" about Alexander, and do you remember the young conqueror, lying on his death-bed, striving to recall what went wrong in his career which had been so magnificent and so successful?

Shakespeare knocked over this idea of Fate and substituted another idea, in the famous passage from "Julius Caesar":

> "Men at some time are masters of their fates:
> The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars
> But in ourselves that we are underlings."

But whether the opposing force comes from within or without it makes little difference. The theme remains—man's conflict with a world in which he finds himself a stranger. And it is not altogether far-fetched to say that in comedies the theme is practically the same as in tragedy, and that they differ from each other mainly in treatment. We laugh heartily at the difficulties and trials of a pair of lovers in a musical comedy, while

we weep over Romeo and Juliet, though probably both are equally "star-crossed", and the writer of comedy twists the ingredients into some sort of temporary solution which we know as "a happy ending". We see in comedies absurd ambitions, ridiculous plans of busybodies, schemes going awry for no particular reason, quarrels and conflicts, but what might so readily move forward to a tragic climax is blown away as a frivolous trifle.

So I come round to the point at which I began. Our ancient forefathers, realising that they were surrounded by mystery, made embodiments of their fears and anxieties in those strange old rites and dances. We are still making plays out of man's inexplicable conflict with the mysteries of life, this little life which, as Prospero said, is "rounded with a sleep". The answer to our perplexities is still hidden, but wrapt in clouds though it may be, we shall go on seeking for it.

> "Thy way is in the sea,
> Thy path in the great waters:
> And Thy footsteps are not known."

MOVEMENT IN THE YORK CYCLE OF MYSTERY PLAYS

In the recent condensed production of the York Mystery Plays, I was fortunate enough to be asked to direct the movement and mime scene throughout the whole Cycle, which lasted three and a quarter hours. This proved to be a most absorbing and thrilling experience.

The plays offered a great range of subject and scene with an enormous variety of movement possibilities. For instance, the conversion of Lucifer and his Angels into devils and their fall from Heaven, involving trying out all methods of rolling, leaping, slithering and somersaulting down a very long flight of stairs! On arrival, the devils to their surprise discovered that they possessed tails, and we all had an amusing time working out varieties of antics with these interesting appendages. The medieval grotesqueness of the devils was contrasted to the simple and pure stylised movement of the Angels, who, dressed in shining white, gold and blue, formed continually changing tableaux around God in heaven and also performed several dances to specially-composed music.

The plays included many great crowd scenes. The groups consisted of nearly a hundred people, mostly amateurs, ranging from small schoolboys to members of the local townswomen's guilds—and the army. It was most rewarding to see how all these people responded so readily to movement.

The miraculous raising of Lazarus from the tomb, followed by the healing of the blind and the lame, culminated in the triumphal Palm Sunday procession. The scarlet-cloaked Burghers of Jerusalem, accompanied by the whole enthusiastic crowd, welcomed Christ and his disciples who walked triumphantly into the city amidst waving branches and resounding shouts of "Hosanna, Hosanna"—in which the little schoolboys joined with almost too much vigour!

This great procession was in marked contrast to the mob passions depicted at the condemnation and crucifixion of Christ, when the shouts of "Crucify, crucify" reverberated in the air from the merciless crowd.

The final scene of the whole Cycle gave, perhaps, the greatest scope for movement. Above, in Heaven, sat God surrounded by the whole host of his Angels, and at his side stood Christ and His Disciples. Below, on earth, summoned together by the Archangel Michael gathered all the Good and Bad Souls—some in fear, others in awe, some with eagerness, others in simple humbleness. The Archangel Michael raising his sword spoke the words of the judgment:

"Stand not together, part you in twain
Ye shall not be all one in bliss.
The Father in heaven does so ordain,
For many of you have wrought amiss.
Ye good, on his right hand now go;
The way to heaven ye know is this.
Ye cursed caitiffs, flee now so
To His left hand, as none of His."

His words were followed by a great rushing, sweeping, surging of the crowd as the Bad Souls, panic-stricken by the entry of Lucifer and his satellites, now reinforced by a legion of red, fork-tailed imps, were caught and hurled shrieking with terror into Hell Mouth, which glowed a wicked red from within. As the last Bad Soul disappeared into the flames, the Good Souls were led triumphantly up the shining stairway into Heaven.

These scenes, together with many others, show that although this religious drama was first performed four hundred years ago on movable wagons where little movement could take place, it yet possesses immense possibilities for movement. The lack of any tradition of movement in mystery plays constitutes, therefore, a great challenge to the producer of to-day who has to deal with motives and scenes as demanded by the present day professional drama, opera and ballet. Fortunately, however, we have in the modern dance for laymen a certain guidance towards the contents of deeply felt almost ritualistic expression. The study and practice of this kind of movement has helped me greatly in the solution of the problem of how to unite humour and serenity in a way adequate to the supreme content of the mystery play.

I think that modern dance movement has never had a greater opportunity to show its worth. Is it not a hint for future themes of a special kind of laymen's group dancing?

GERALDINE STEPHENSON.

COURSES TO BE HELD IN LONDON, 1951 - 52

Choral Dance Drama

Rehearsals conducted by Rudolf Laban and Lisa Ullmann on Saturdays 17th November and 8th December, 1951, and 26th January and 1st March, 1952.

Christmas Holiday Course

31st December, 1951—5th January, 1952.

Easter Holiday Course

16th-23rd April, 1952.

For details of the above courses write to The Secretary, Art of Movement Studio, 183-5 Oxford Road, Manchester, 13.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE, 1952

As is mentioned in the Secretary's Report of the 1951 Conference, it is proposed to try, as an experiment, a residential weekend (Friday evening to Sunday evening) for the 1952 Conference. Further details will be circulated later.

CAN WE HELP YOU ?

Guild members who feel that they would like to have some help in their work are invited to write to the Secretary giving particulars. She will then see what can be arranged.